long while before had largely perished or vanished; and of all countries on the earth, it is in the Caucasus that the greatest number of relic peoples has been preserved down to the present.

The significance of the Caucasus in the history of human culture is unique; there is no comparison with any of the other mountain ranges mentioned, which share with the Caucasus the quality of a divide and a refuge. Every ancient civilization famous for its mythology survives in Dagestan down to our days. Trans-Caucasia and the region of Maikop in the northwestern foothills of the mountains, both integral parts of the Caucasus and ancient Caucasian lands, are, like Dagestan, the home of very ancient metal-working societies. Quite a few terms for metals and tools in Indo-European, Semitic and other Near and Middle Eastern languages are of Caucasian origin. The primordial cultural significance of the Caucasus finds eloquent expression in the classical myth of Prometheus, the fire-bringer. But it is not only pre-historical or early historical cultures that are at home in the Caucasus; historical cultures of a considerable age, surviving in the tradition of the two groups of ancient inhabitants of Trans-Caucasia --the Georgians and the Armenians--are also to be found there.

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Distribution of Settlements

172 The primary inhabitants of the Caucasus, the Caucasians proper, are ancient. They have been there since time immemorial, and the Caucasus was known to the peoples of the Ancient Near East from the dawn of their history.

Human settlements in Caucasian lands go back well into prehistoric times. In those early epochs people were living not only in the larger Trans-Caucasian valley, but also in the northern part of the Great Caucasus. Since no systematic archeological research on a large scale has been done so far, almost all archeological discoveries have been made accidentally. It may well be imagined how rich the yield of systematic archeological research would be in countries whose history is connected with that 172 of the Ancient Near East. Of particular in- 171 terest are the Bronze Age finds; those of the T'rialet'i culture in Trans-Caucasia, and in the northwestern part of the Great Caucasus, those of the Maikop area. The objects of major interest are swords and daggers of the Caucasian type, the famous short-sword akinákes (Abkhaz-Cherkess aqama, which designates the present-day kinzhal, also a loan word in Russian), and ornamented standard-tops, usually in the shape of an animal. They exhibit a

172 highly developed metal culture and a refined
171 craftsmanship. Typical of the finds of the Maikop area is the representation of animals, often of animals fighting with each other: stags or elks attacked by tigers or leopards, etc. They exhibit a peculiar style or stylization which has led this genre of art to be called the animal style, also the style of animal fight (von Strzygowski); the style seems to have as its center, or at least one of its earliest centers, this part of the Caucasus. In the south of the Maikop area there is found another commonly represented motif, animal standards--representations of animals serving as an ornament on the top of (probably tribal) standards; these can be connected with earlier objects of the Urartu culture around Lake Van, often called Chaldean culture. The animal style is found all over eastern Europe and northern Asia, and is therefore called the Eurasian animal style. It seems to have spread from the Maikop area, or perhaps even from the Chaldean lands on Lake Van, to the middle course of the Kama, west of the Urals; and then to have migrated all across the West Siberian plains to the Altai mountains and the Minusinsk Basin--through which the upper Yenisei streams--north of the Sayan Mountains. There it shows a rich local development which is also typical of the Bronze Age in south-central Siberia. From there it has

172 continued its migration southeastward as far
171 as Noyon (Noyin)-Ola in Mongolia, and finally into northern China. Thus we see a pre-historic cultural connection between the Caucasus and north central Asia and the Far East; this connection took place in the Bronze Age, probably the later Bronze Age, and consisted at least in a cultural transmission over a distance rarely observed during any historical period down to the beginning of the modern
174 age. In mythical and legendary traditions,
101 peoples of the Caucasus were known to the ancient Mesopotamians, the Assyro-Babylonians, and the Hebrews of the Old Testament as the Gimirru or the Gomer. This name survives well into classical antiquity, when there are repeated mentions of the Kimmerioi as living on the northern and northeastern shores of the Black Sea, and after whom the Strait of Kerch and Taman was called the Kimmerian (or Cimmerian) Bosporus. It is quite possible that this same name is found again in that of Crimea. Peoples living in or near the Caucasus were the Togarma and the Gog and Magog of the Old Testament.

174 The lands of the Caucasus in a larger sense remained without any literature or historiography of their own until Christian times, i.e., until the time of their own conversion to Christianity in the 4th and 5th centuries. But before this time they were in the immediate

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Khevsur, Pschv,
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C. G. [713] Some had the sign of the cross upon their shields, so that they looked exactly like medieval European knights and Crusaders.

C. G. 764 /171 Up in the country of the Khevsurs a few very ancient churches can be found; near these, often isolated, stand some typically Khevsurian tomb structures or burial chapels unique in the Caucasus. Funeral ceremonies held by the Khevsurs are (or were ?) often accompanied by horse races, an ancient custom of horse-breeding nomads of the steppes. (This custom is reminiscent of the "dokhia" [δόχια] of some Turkic tribes in the plains near the Altai, described by the Byzantine envoy Menandros Protector, who was sent in 568 to the Great-Khan of the Türküt in the Altai region, a territory which is now part of northwestern Mongolia.) Perhaps the Khevsurs borrowed this custom from the Alans, the nomadic ancestors of the present-day Oset'i.

S'vanet'ians

C. G. 162 101 Another K'art'velian group which in its mountainous seclusion has preserved numerous ancient customs and traditions is the Svans (or Shvan, Strabon's Soanes [Σοάνες]), who live in the high valleys of the Ingur and Ts'khenis-Tskhali, just south of the central high massifs of the Caucasus, between Gvandra and Shkhara. Their language is the most archaic of all the K'art'velian tongues. The Svans are

C. [141] outstanding for their height; two meters is not rare.

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177 on the top of the mountain. When he had grown up and had to return to his family, the eagle gave him one of his feathers, with the advice to set fire to it in case of imminent danger. Then the eagle would appear at once and bring help. In fact, this need for help arose, when the birth of Rustam caused great difficulties and danger to his mother's life. As soon as his father had kindled the feather, the eagle appeared, foretold the birth of a huge heavy child, a future hero, and declared the necessity of performing a Caesarian operation. Among the instructions for treating the mother's wound, rubbing it with the feather of the eagle is mentioned. The appearance of the eagle immediately after one of his feathers has been set on fire at a time of peril, and the magical healing power of the feather when a wound is rubbed with it, are distinctly reflected in the two stories handed down in non-Iranian languages. It is noteworthy that this motif of the eagle and his magical feather also occurs in a story of an Iranian tribe, the Bakhtiyaris. But it is also found in a passage of the Avesta, the holy stripctures of the Zoroastrians, and it has been previously stated by the present author that this conception played an important part in the ritual of ancient India and is also widespread in the folklore of modern India. (See Bernhard Geiger, Die Amesha Spentas, pp. 73f.)

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171 The legend of Prometheus also deserves our special attention. It is transmitted in Ossetic and in some of the Caucasian languages.

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(See the German translations in A. Dirr's Kaukasische Märchen, [Jena 1920], pp. 236-248.) According to the Ossetic version, a godless oppressor by the name of Amiran was punished by God, who ordered him placed in chains and closed up in a cave. A shepherd who was wandering around in the mountains heard the cried of pain uttered by the titan Amiran who was trying deparately, but in vain, to free himself from the fetters. After some time, the shepherd suddenly found an opening leading into the inside of the cave. He made futile attempts to hand to the titan the extremely heavy sword which was lying at his side. Then the shepherd was asked by Amiran to fetch from his own house the hearth chain by which the kettle hangs over the fire, and he is warned not to speak a single word on his way back to the mountain; for otherwise his help would be in vain. However, the shepherd's wife, plagued by curiosity, urged him incessantly to tell her the purpose of carrying the hearth chain to the mountains. (For a chain above the hearth and the sinfulness of its removal, see above.[1] He remained silent, but at last could not refrain from telling her to keep quiet; he would tell her the reason later. Because he broke the proscribed silence, the entrance of the cave in which he had found the titan, closed up, and the titan could no longer be freed. He remained chained to the rock. Food and water were brought to him by a raven. Whenever

[1] [Cf. cat. 116, p. 566 -- Analyst]

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Prometheus attempts to break his fetters, groaning and wailing, the mountains shake, the earth shivers, thunder rumbles and rocks fall down into the valleys. He will remain imprisoned and suffering until God delivers him.

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582 The NORTHWESTERN CAUCASIANS. No one will take it amiss if an old Kabardian marries a young girl. Although the Cherkess tribes along the coast of the Black Sea strongly discourage such pairing, disparity of age is not considered a marriage impediment.[167] While on his expedition in Circassia in 1927, Ladyženskij found no case of a young *man* marrying an old lady.[168]

Taking the Avars as an example of the NORTHEASTERNERS—marriages between rich old men of 50 to 60 and girls of 12 were not uncommon in the last part of the nineteenth century.[169]

Although neither customary nor Islamic law establish an absolute minimum age,[170] the *adats* sometime determine a *relative* marriage age. Thus a young man sometimes may not marry before his older brother, as is the case, for example among the Chechens[171] and the Cherkess.[172] Only if his brother happens to be far from home and gives his explicit permission, may he marry. Anyone acting [428] contrary to this customary law would *ipso facto* lose all rights to the family inheritance. In spite of this heavy sanction, the bride-price *(kalym)* would be paid for the offender and the marriage would be considered valid. The *adats* of the Cherkess are even stricter about girls marrying before their older sisters. To marry without her parents' permission before her older sister would bring upon her the curse of the family ; in fact, they would even refuse the " filthy " brideprice. The motive behind these customs is to assure a marriage for the older members of the family before they become too old.[172a]

2. Debt as an Impediment

[426] According to the adat collection of the Dzher, Kist, Galgai, Tsori, Ingushi and Karabulak tribes a father may not give his daughter in marriage to anyone before he receives permission from his creditor.[173]

3. The Obligation of Proving One's Bravery before Marriage

171 582 Baddeley informs us of another very peculiar marriage impediment. " In Deedo-land, formerly, no man would give his daughter or sister in marriage to a suitor who had not at least one Georgian right hand or arm nailed to the wall of his dwelling."[174] This was, no doubt, intended as a proof of the lover's mettle before the father of the girl would give his consent.[175] Such tests as a *conditio sine qua non* for marriage are found throughout the world, sometimes

[167] Ladyženskij, FT, pp. 196 f. Castagné, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

[168] Ladyženskij, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

[169] L'vov, " Domašnjaja i semejnaja žizn etc.," p. 20 *note*.

[170] This is especially evidenced by the widespread practice of infant betrothal and marriage in the North Caucasus and neighbourhood (*infra*, pp. 76, 78 ff).

[171] Erckert, *Der Kaukasus*, p. 118.

[172] Ladyženskij, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

[172a] *Ibid.*

[173] Lantzeff, FT, p. 116, f.n.

[174] Baddeley, The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus, p. 9.

[175] Lantzeff, FT, p. 116, f.n.

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consisting merely in killing a wild animal (*e. g.*, the Yukaghir) or sometimes in killing a man (*e. g.*, the Yoruba of West Africa).[176] Taibout de Marigny[177] describes how a Cherkess maiden would ridicule her would-be lover with the taunt "Why you haven't even stolen a cow yet and you want to marry me." And Herodotus, speaking of the Sauromatians, the probable ancestors of the Ossetes, informs us that the virgins could not marry till they had killed at least one enemy, or according to Hippocrates, three.[178] The Ossetine poet, Kosta Chetagurov, describes a custom of the nineteenth century according to which the suitor would have to live with his future bride's family from two to four weeks, during which time he would have to convince them that he is a true gentleman, clever, and reliable, in a word, possessing all qualities expected of a good husband.[179]

4. Impediments of Physical and Mental Deficiency

In Circassia venereal diseases, insanity, and impotency impede marriage.[180] The extent of these and similar impediments have unfortunately not yet been investigated.

5. Impediment of Divorce and Widowhood

The incapacity of a divorcée to contract a second marriage is indeed a very rare impediment and is usually only temporary. We find such an impediment in Armenia and in Khevsuria, and of these two cases we shall speak at length when treating the Caucasian divorce laws. A refusal to enter upon a levirate marriage may entail such an impediment (*infra*, pp. 71 f). In parts of Caucasus where Islamic law prevails there is of course the temporary prohibition for widows and divorcées to marry before their "waiting period" (*'iddah*) is over. When a husband dies, the widow is obliged to wait at least four months and ten days before she may remarry (Koran, ii. 234). A divorcée may not remarry before she has had three menstruations (*kurû*); in the case of older women, the *'iddah* is set at three months.[181]

Although customary law does not prohibit second marriages, they are looked upon everywhere in the Caucasus as inferior. The bride-price is considerably smaller and the nuptials take place without the customary solemnities.[182]

[176] Cf. Briffault for other examples, *The Mothers*, II, pp. 184 f.

[177] *Voyage en Circassie 1835*, p. 55.

[178] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 13, *note* 1.

[179] N. F. Takoeva, "Kosta Chetagurov—narodnyi poet osetin etnograf-kavkazoved," SE, 1949, No. 2, p. 125.

[180] Ladyženskij, FT, p. 199.

[181] Koran, ii. 228; lxv. 4. Cf. Juynboll, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

[182] *Infra*, pp. 121, 131.
See also O. Karanailov, "Aul Coch," SMOMPK, IV (1884), No. 2, p. 16. Vasil'kov, "Očerk byta temirgoevcev," SMOMPK, XXIX (1901), No. 1, p. 102.

Dialect		Source
Nuc		Lomtatidze, II, p. 118, §§ 185
Dzherakh		Lomtatidze, II, p. 119, §§ 1
Sakha		Lomtatidze, II, p. 121
Ingush		Grabovskii, op. cit., p. 18

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for the family accruing from such a purchase. And as anywhere else in the world, only *good* brides were bought. The fact that a girl was purchased was a kind of flattery and even a definite proof of her good standing. The "price-tag" remained attached to her for the rest of her life, and in it she could find sufficient food for her vanity and self-complacency.

Kebin occupies a middle position between an actual bride-price and a dowry. Like a dowry it aims at being a security for the bride's future, and like the dowry it is given to the *bride* and not to her family. On the other hand, it resembles the bride-price in as much as it is paid by the *groom's* family, it is accompanied with much bargaining, and, finally, the amount is determined according to the same standards as the bride-price.

We have said above that through the influence of Russian and Islamic law bride purchase has become more and more like a guarantee against divorce or security in case of widowhood. However, we did not wish to say that before the coming of Islamism or of the Russians there was no economic security given to the bride. A less developed and relatively small dowry or *kebin* could have existed in the Caucasus long before Islamic *mahr* "received full approbation from Allah." We know that, independently of Islamism, the position of the female sex was greatly improved by a dowry, e. g., among the Japanese, Chinese, Ancient Germans, Kelts, and Babylonians. The Romans and the Greeks regarded a marriage without a dowry practically as concubinage.[58] If it could exist among these peoples independently of Mohammed, it could have existed in the Caucasus independently of Islamism as well. In fact we find a kind of dowry in North Caucasus in the practical wedding gifts given to the bride by her family.[59] Of course, a large dowry is out of place in such a strongly exogamous society as we find in the greater part of North Caucasia, for the family property must remain within the family. On the other hand, from our description of the wedding customs we shall be able to observe the relatively important rôle these gifts play in the endogamous part of North Caucasus.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that bride purchase in the strict sense of the word fits into the Caucasian economic form of life quite well. Though bride wealth is found equally in mother-right and father-right societies, bride purchase in the strict sense is an institution found almost exclusively in pastoral societies or in societies that have been greatly influenced by pastoral peoples, or that have passed through pastoral stages, such as we find in Africa, Asia, and Europe. We do not find the bride-*price* in Australia, Melanesia, Polynesia or in America.[60]

§ 2. BY CAPTURE

"Bride capture" is just as much a blanket term as "bride purchase." Here too we must distinguish between genuine bride capture and various forms

[58] Schmidt-Koppers, *Völker und Kulturen*, p. 310.

[59] Amirov, "Sredi gorcev severnago Dagestana." SSKG, VII (1873), p. 30 f.

[60] R. Briffault, *op. cit.*, II, p. 218; Westermarck, *History of Marriage*, II (1925), pp. 278 ff.

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to wife, a change more sensibly felt among pastoral peoples than in any other society.

(5) The virginity test, too, though not restricted to pastoral peoples,[105] is very characteristic of their culture. The North Caucasians, all with only the Chechens as possible exception,[106] still have, or at least have had, the virginity test as an essential part of the wedding. The marriage remained uncertain till the bride passed or failed this examination.

It would certainly be of great interest to discover the meaning of and motive behind this practice. There is, of course, no universal explanation for the custom. What motivated the Nigerian tribes to introduce the practice need not be identical with the motives of the Chinese of Kwangtong or of the tribes of Samoa, of the Sakalavas of Madagascar or of the Slavs.

To understand the Caucasian virginity test we must put aside our Western notions regarding the value of the physical integrity of a bride and try to get behind the mind of the North Caucasian, behind the economic, social, and religious standards of the *Caucasians*.

Negatively stated, the virginity test of the Caucasians is in itself no proof of a high esteem for the *virtue* of chastity, for even if it can be proven that the loss of corporal integrity was caused by an accident, the value of the bride seems not to differ from the girl who lost it through actual illicit intercourse. Among the Akhvakh (Daghestanians) a guest or lover might do to a maiden what he wished provided that the hymen remained intact.[107]

Since the perpetuation of the family property and especially of the family cult depends on legitimate male children, there will always be uncertainty about the fatherhood of the first male child if the hymen is found perforated before the consummation of marriage. The groom's family would be constantly haunted by the thought that a stranger (the first-born male child) may become the head of the family. In a word, the economic and religious importance of the first-born male child may have been responsible for the high esteem for virginity and for the necessity of a proof of virginity on the wedding night.[108]

This attitude toward the inviolateness of the maidenhead has been, no doubt, responsible for many other Caucasian observances. The *kalym*, for example, is much higher for a maiden than a widow or divorcée. This fact, in

[105] For a large number of examples and bibliography see Briffault, *The Mothers*, III, pp. 333—345. See also Schmidt-Koppers, *Völker und Kulturen*, pp. 209 f.

[106] But even here we do not have a positive proof for the non-existence of the virginity test. Mere silence of older authors is *indicative* of the absence of the practice, but it certainly is no proof. The neighbouring Ossetes, Tartars and Mountain Georgians have the custom too.

[107] An accidental rupture of the hymen is much more frequent in the Caucasus than one might be inclined to believe. From early childhood the girl is obliged to do difficult work, to carry heavy loads, to climb and slide down steep, rocky slopes, covered with briers, etc., which might at any unexpected moment rob the girl of her most valued possession. Dubrovin, after referring to these possibilities, points out that frequent ritual washing, which begins quite early in life, can explain many a case too (*Istorija*, I, i, p. 572). For the practice of the Akhvakh, see *infra*, pp. 181 f.

[108] A similar explanation has been suggested by Briffault for the custom in various parts of the world. In any case, it does explain the practice among the Caucasians.

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III. THE FAMILY

Chapter IX

The Offspring

§ 1. CONCEPTION

833 Herodotus has accused the Lesghians of copulating "in public as beasts are wont to do."[1] Such an accusation, however, is absolutely false. Even the slightest sign of affection between husband and wife is tabooed by customary law throughout the Caucasus, except, of course, in strictest secrecy.[2]

Owing to the delicate nature of the subject, very little material has been gathered by the explorers, even though these matters may have a deep sociological significance, as, for example, the extent of birth control, or a psychological and religious significance, such as, for example, the extent of sexual taboos, voluntary abstinence, etc.

841 Astoundingly widespread is the taboo of marital intercourse at times of menstruation. A glance at Frazer's or Westermarck's classical works[3] will suffice to convince us of the universality of this prohibition. This same horror of menstruous blood is found in the Caucasus also. However, very little data are at our disposal. We are not told how long these "monthly" periods last, nor the extent of the horror. The Pshavs and the Khevsurs have little stone hovels (*samretlo*) situated in an open field,[4] (or now usually next to the home),[5] where the unclean woman must stay during her monthly periods. Kovalevskij attributes the practice to Zoroastrianism.[6] He does not seem to be aware that such segregation and "hovels" are found in other parts of the world, where Zoroastrianism has never been known. The fact that the "unclean" woman must wash herself in cow's urine,[7] however, most probably has been taken over from the ancient Iranian religion.

[1] Potocki, *Voyage dans les steps d'Astrakhan et du Caucase*, I, p. 240.

[2] Cf. *infra*, pp. 63, 175 f.

[3] Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (abridged), pp. 207—210; 595—607. Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, I, p. 230.

[4] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 216.

[5] Hahn, *Bilder aus dem Kaukasus*, pp. 72 f.

[6] *Zakon*, I, pp. 98 f.

[7] Cf. *Zakon*, I, pp. 83—122.

The ancient Iranian religion considered cows as sacred animals.

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respect her rights. Chechen women enjoy considerably more freedom than do the women in Daghestan.[65] But even the Lesghian women are not entirely without rights. We have seen how in matters regarding engagement and marriage the mother plays an important part. This may be a vestige of an ancient mother-right culture.

The SOUTHERN CAUCASIANS. Despite the slavish condition to which the South Caucasian *adats* condemn the female sex, the women are given certain unusual privileges, enjoyed not even by the menfolk. In Khevsuria[66] and Svanetia,[67] just as in W. Circassia[68] and OSSETIA,[69] a woman is able to put an end to a savage duel by a mere word or by her very presence. The Svan need but touch her and he is, at least temporarily, secure even in the presence of his bitterest enemy.[70]

Finally, we should not forget that the women are the official owners of their engagement and wedding gifts, and if divorced, also of the *kebin*.[71]

§ 4. PROBLEMS

The two main problems of this chapter are: (1) Why must the women do most of the work? (2) Why is the status of women throughout the Caucasus so unfavourable? These questions can be answered only in the light of our entire study and in the light of the entire culture of the North Caucasians. Her unfavourable and still privileged position as mistress of the house and as an asylum for any murderer resembles very closely the condition of the women in a society such as that found among pastoral nomads of Asia. It is indeed difficult to determine just in how far the pastoral nomads of Asia are responsible for the status of women in North Caucasus and in how far the general economic conditions among the mountaineers have contributed to the oppression of the female sex. Here we wish to point out one important contributing factor: feuds and blood-feuds. By no means do we maintain that this is the *most* important or the *only* factor; it is, however, *a very important* one. Any mountaineer may object to the accusation that he is an idler by saying: "We men are constantly exposing our lives for our wives and children, while the women are able to work in peace and security. How can we be soldiers and farmers at the same time?" Anitov heard the same argument used in Kaitago-Tabasaran, where formerly there was hardly a man in all Kaitago that had not killed or cooperated in killing another man. As a consequence of feuds, the men had to be constantly on the lookout, constantly hiding, and frequently

[65] P. Plamitzke, *Die Tschetschenen*, p. 33.
[66] Iraid Bey, *op. cit.*, p. 267.
[67] Dur, FT, p. 43.
[68] Meurier, *Guide au Caucase*, I, p. 136.
[69] V. P. Takoeva, "Kosta Chetagurov — narodnyj poet osetin etnograf-kavkazoved," SE, 1949, No. 2, p. 229.
[70] Dur, *l. c.*
[71] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, I, p. 143.

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have been felt either exclusively among the Southern Caucasians or have not been very great. The Roman-Byzantine influence was passed on to the North Caucasian tribes mainly through the Armenians and Georgians, which, however, did not affect their customary laws to any appreciable extent. Kovalevskij had a tendency to overemphasize these influences: he believed, for example, that the practice of offering an engagement gift to the bride or her family was of Roman-Byzantine origin,[1] and that the status of the Caucasian women had been greatly affected by Byzantine law.[2]

§ 2. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY OF THE CAUCASIANS IN THE LIGHT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Analysis of Caucasian Adats: Predominant Character of North Caucasian Marriage and Family Customary Laws That of a Pastoral Nomadic Civilization

After having removed the above-mentioned historical influences and changes from the marriage and family laws of the Caucasians, we now arrive at a more or less clear-cut picture. Considering the marriage and family customary laws as a whole, we must conclude that we have before us a typically pastoral nomadic[3] marriage and family, and this although there are no pastoral nomads in the Caucasus in the strict sense of the word. Though some of the elements we shall discuss are also found in other cultures (for example, adultery is punished severely by food-gatherers as by pastoral nomads), it is the entire institution of marriage and family, as a whole, that should be noted. It should also be noted that the picture we present is a composite and general one; for details, therefore, one must look to the references given.

For example, how widespread *polygyny* was among the Caucasians. We fully agree with Briffault, who has shown that all societies which have passed "through a prolonged pastoral stage, except in the highest degree polygamous."[4]

[1] *Op. cit.*, I, p. 136.

[2] *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 119 ff. He treats of these influences in detail in *op. cit.*, I, pp. 83—122.

[3] By pastoral nomadic we understand the various customs and laws commonly found among pastoral nomads. Turco-Mongol and Indo-Europeans. Many of the components of Semitic and Hamitic cultures are also pastoral nomadic. Whether the pastoral nomadic culture is immediately following upon the food-gathering stage, being the result of original herding, or only secondary or even tertiary (i. e., the result of later development of a pastoral-agrarian culture) does not affect our conclusions.

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(c) and the patria potestas in the extreme form as found in North Caucasia are typically pastoral nomadic.

(d) The father alone has the right to choose a mate for his children, and boys are given more consideration in the choice than the girls.[18]

(e) The bride-price, though found in other cultures also, has a typically pastoral coloring in the Caucasus since it is measured mainly in cattle and horses.[19] Bride wealth as a price in the strict sense of the word is found almost exclusively among pastoral peoples.[20]

(f) *Bride-stealing*[21] is a common practice among pastoral nomads. All Turco-Tartars, Indo-Europeans, and the Semites have or at least have had frequent recourse to marriage by capture.

(g) The various (*agrenci prohibitions*),[22]

(h) the veiling of the bride in a special hut (*anthâra*), the obligation of the young man to cover his entire head and face except for an opening for his eyes,[23] the obligation of the bride and groom to hide during the wedding,[24] the bride's veiling customary sentences, the post-nuptial obligation of the couple not to appear together before their parents or older brethren,[25] all these customs have in no way a vestige of former group marriage, fraternal polyandry, bride capture and the like, as we have sufficiently refuted above, but they are most likely an expression of the extreme modesty peculiar to pastoral peoples, a reaction to the "great change" from single to married life, more strongly felt among pastoral nomads than any other peoples.

(i) It is the male who proposes to the female and not vice versa,[26] likewise a phenomenon found unfailingly among pastoral nomads.

(j) The great love for children, especially for boys,[27] although found in other cultures reaches its highest point among pastoral nomads. Connected with this craving after male children is the custom of marrying a second wife in case the first is sterile or "unable" to bear male offspring.

(k) The wedding customs[28] are typically pastoral nomadic in character: dramatization of bride capture, horse-racing, the proof of virginity with subsequent rejoicing if the bride is found "chaste," or mutilation and execution if found "unchaste," the special ceremonies and wishes for fertility, especially for the birth of many male children, the triple encircling of the fireplace, etc. are all typically pastoral nomadic.

[18] *Supra*, pp. 183—186.
[19] *Supra*, pp. 79—81.
[20] *Supra*, pp. 82—91.
[21] *Supra*, p. 91.
[22] *Supra*, pp. 91—96.
[23] *Supra*, pp. 106—110.
[24] Seidlitz, "Die Abchasen," *Globus*, LXVI (1894), p. 40.
[25] *Supra*, p. 124.
[26] *Supra*, p. 166. For similar customs among the ancient Indo-Europeans see *infra*, p. 198.
[27] *Supra*, pp. 100—106.
[28] *Supra*, pp. 124, 139 ff.
[29] *Supra*, pp. 126—128, especially Table 16.

1 [i.e. a trait found among the Caucasians--Analyst]

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(14) Then there is the fact that *a woman constitutes an asylum* for any murderer,[30] a fact found among the North Caucasians as well as among the Asiatic nomads.

(15) The *adats regarding divorce*,[31]

(16) the *penalties for sexual offenses*;[32]

(17) the *division of labour*,[33] allowing men plenty of time for loafing, sport, and raids,

(18) and many other *adats which place the female sex at a great disadvantage*[34] remind us very much of a pastoral society.

(19) Then, of course, there are the many other features of the North Caucasian marriage and family *adats* which we have been able only to touch upon rather superficially, for they refer to the joint-family and kinship in general rather than to the biological family. The North Caucasian society, for example, has had till recently a *patriarchal joint-family organization*[35] very similar to that found among pastoral nomads. Just as among the Indo-Europeans and the Turco-Mongols the central interest of the North Caucasian has been, and in places still is, the joint-family. According to the *adats*, the individual family, till it becomes independent, plays a very subordinate part in society. The tribe and state mean but little. Crimes, criminals, and penalties in the strict sense of the word are of very recent origin: any damage done to the sib (not so much to any individual) whether accidental or intentional, are the only form of "crime" found in the *adats*. The reparation of the damages made by the "offending" sib (not the individual who inflicted the harm) corresponds to our concept of penalty. We have also said very little about the *inheritance rights* of the mountaineers of North Caucasia, for to speak of inheritance without first describing the joint-family and kinship *adats* would be impossible. It seems that originally, just as is the case in pastoral nomadic societies, the rights were restricted to the male children with special privileges reserved for the first-born son. Finally, there is hardly another place in the world where *blood-feuds* are so common as in the Caucasus, and, we know, pastoral nomadic peoples have always been fond of settling their quarrels in this particular manner, more so than any other people. In a word, we are dealing with a "pastoral nomadic" marriage and family when we deal with North Caucasian marriage and family *adats*.

We must however, keep in mind that there are different zones of intensity of nomadic traits in North Caucasia the most pastoral nomadic in character are the marriage and family of the Cherkess; then perhaps follow those of the Abkhaz, then the Chechens, and finally the Lesghians. The Ossetine *adats* are perhaps even more typically pastoral nomadic than those of the Cherkess. The Kumykian and Nogaian *adats*, as well as those of other Turco-Mongols of North Caucasus,

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are also typically pastoral nomadic. The South Caucasians, of course, possess considerably less pastoral nomadic traits than do our North Caucasians.

2. Temporal and Causal Designation

That the marriage and family customary laws of the various North Caucasian mountain tribes should be so distinctly pastoral nomadic demands an explanation. When, why and how have these *adats* acquired such a character?

A final answer to this problem is impossible without first having solved the problem of race, original home, and many other related problems regarding the *individual* tribes, such as their early migrations, cultural contacts, and their history in general. Moreover, not only is Caucasology still in its infancy, but the Caucasus is itself one of the most culturally complicated areas in the world. Immediately south of the Caucasus we have the great ancient cultural centres (Ancient Near East!); immediately north of the Caucasus we have the steppes, the scene of many an early migration; finally, the Caucasus itself was used during these migrations as a corridor and sometimes as a place of refuge. In an attempt to determine the causal and temporal relations of what we termed "pastoral nomadic" it is very essential not to assume more than our present knowledge of the Caucasus will allow us. We wish therefore only to throw some light upon the problem and to offer a partial solution.

But what do we know about the origin, the original home, the early migrations, cultural contacts, and history of the North Caucasian peoples and tribes? Very little indeed! We know only that the North Caucasian mountaineers lived elsewhere formerly and that they would never have settled in their present isolated mountain villages if they had not been forced to do so by their enemies. We also know that these migrations began long before the ancient Greek and Latin writes became aware of their existence.

Fortunately, prehistory offers us some useful information toward the solution of our problem. The abundance of finds in North Caucasus, Southeastern Europe and Southwestern Asia leave no doubt about this region being the home of a highly-developed pastoral nomadic civilization. It is here that the original home of the Indo-Europeans most likely is to be sought, and, as Vambéry pointed out almost seventy-five years ago,[33] the original home of the Altai nomads may have extended up to the Caspian Sea, the immediate vicinity of North Caucasus.

The steppes immediately north of the Caucasus was a stage on which various pastoral peoples repeatedly appeared, acted their parts, and then disappeared behind the scenes, giving way to other nomadic hordes more powerful than themselves.[34] The powerful nomadic Scythians (c. 800—300 B.C.)[35] were

[33] *Die primitive Kultur des turko-tatarischen Volkes*, p. 14.

[34] F. Hančar, "Die Beile aus Koban in der Wiener Sammlung kaukasischer Altertümer," *Wiener Prähistorische Zeitschrift*, XXI (1934), pp. 12 ff; Hančar, "Kaukasus-Luristan," *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua*, 1934, Minns volume, pp. 47—112.
W. Schmidt, *Rassen und Völker*, II, pp. 174—196.

[35] Cf. E. H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks*, Cambridge, 1913.
M. I. Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*, Oxford, 1922.

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was the procreation of children, but especially of sons, who would one day become the performers of the sacred rites connected with ancestor worship. The cult for the departed was connected with the cult of the fireplace and was looked upon as the most sacred duty of the individual and of the family. Since the members of the same sib were descendents of the same ancestors, they were bound to one another in life and in death. This solidarity explains the frequency of family feuds, for blood-revenge was considered a very sacred duty. Polygyny was relatively common; polyandry, however, was taboo. The proof of virginity, the levirate, and the regulations regarding divorce and many other matters are very similar to those still in practice among the Ossetes of the Caucasus. It is indeed worthy of note that the Ossetine *adats* differ but slightly from the customary laws of their ancestors, while, as we have observed throughout the present study, the North Caucasians, especially the Cherkess, the Abkhaz, and the Ingushi differ but little from their neighbours, the Ossetes.[46]

The contact with the Indo-Europeans, especially with the Ossetes and their ancestors must have been very important. We need but think of the powerful Scythians and then, later on, of the Alans who made their presence felt as far east as China and as far west as Spain. Many of the customs, especially of the Cherkess, Abkhaz, and Ingushi have certainly been borrowed from the Ossetes; the many legends about ancient heroes, especially the so-called Nart-stories, the many a godlet now worshipped by the North Caucasian are certainly of Indo-European origin.

If we now compare the Turco-Mongolian society with that of the North Caucasians and ancient Indo-Europeans we shall find a striking similarity in the family organizations of the three groups.[47] To point out a few of the more

[46] Among other practices of the ancient Indo-Europeans might be mentioned child-marriages, the polyandric, the obligation of the bride to keep silence, the custom of veiling and covering the bride's face, mother-in-law abstinence, etc. See especially E. Hermann, "Die Eheformen der Urindogermanen," *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, pp. 39—62. We have based our description of the ancient Indo-European family on: Koppers, *op. cit.*, pp. 8—11; A. Nehring, *op. cit.*; O. Schrader, *op. cit., passim*; E. Hermann, *op. cit., passim*, and [illegible] *op. cit.*, pp. 17—43.

The ancient Slavs countenanced polygamy, a custom that continued to the tenth century A. D. Polyandry, however, was a privilege of the rich. The impediment of consanguinity and disparity of social rank were strictly insisted upon. Girls would be married off against their will. We also find the *inokhaestvo* among the ancient Slavs. A wife was acquired either by purchase or capture. A distinction between a joint-family (*rodovaia or bolšaia semia*) and the individual (*otcovskaia or malaia semia*) was made, with a patriarch (*starpsta or starešina*) at the head. It is also interesting to note that the same concept of a household is found in Russia as in North Caucasia, namely "fireplace." Blood-feuds, bloodwite, the disadvantageous position of the female sex, the *patria potestas* and many other features of the Slavic family life very closely resemble the Caucasian societies. Ancestor worship centred around the fireplace and the male head of the joint-family was the family priest. Vestiges of the cult are still to be found in Ukraine (T. Ellinek, *Historic Origin and Social Development of Family Life in Russia*, pp. 2 ff.). For more about the Slavic family organization see Zenkovsky, *Die südslavische Grossfamilie in ihrer Beziehung zum asiatischen Grossraum*. Many of these elements are still found among the Armenians, Persians, Kurds, etc.

[47] See Koppers, *op. cit.*, p. 15; A. Nehring, *op. cit.*, pp. 169—173. As W. Schmidt pointed out more than 20 years ago in his *Völker und Kulturen*, elements of the pastoral nomadic civilization are also found among the Hamito-Semitic peoples.

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essential parallels—characteristic of the Turco-Mongolian family are: the almost complete absence of mother-right and totemistic practices, the emphasis placed on the joint-family and the male members, special rights for the first-born son, importance of the male head of the family and the *patria potestas*, the disadvantageous position of the female sex, blood-feuds, exogamy, the *kalym* which is usually paid in live-stock, the dread of incest, the severe penalties for sexual offenses, fireplace ceremony at weddings, the high esteem for the bride's virginity, the unusual craving for male children, the importance of the bridal processions etc.

There is also a religious connection between the North Caucasians, the Indo-Europeans, and the Turco-Mongols, a connection that confirms our claim of the existence of a social connection between the three groups. It is not only the *similarity* of the religions of the three groups that we must keep in mind but also the intimate connection, the *organic* connection, between the nomadic social and religious forms. The solidarity which exists among the members of a sib, the great longing for male children, blood-feuds, the levirate, the *patria potestas*, the wedding custom of walking around the fireplace, and many other practices are fundamentally connected with ancestor worship and cult for the dead. Ancestor worship is one of the essential features of the religion of the Indo-Europeans, the Turco-Mongols, and the North Caucasians. Moreover, among all three groups ancestor worship is linked up with the worship of the fireplace. Another very essential part of the pastoral nomadic religion was the custom of sacrificing horses. W. Koppers has shown the great similarity between the horse-sacrifices of the Indo-European and Altai peoples;[*] R. Bleichsteiner proved beyond question the existence of the practice throughout the highlands of Caucasia.[**] Horse-sacrifices among the Indo-Europeans and the North Caucasians are certainly of Inner Asiatic origin.

Thus we see that even though the North Caucasians are not pastoral nomadic in the economic sense—the economy of the steppes is impossible in the mountains, especially in the unfertile valleys of the Caucasus—they are pastoral nomadic in their social organization. *A connection between the North Caucasian society and that of Inner Asia is beyond question.*

3. Vestiges of More Ancient Cultures In the Marriage and Family Customary Laws of the North Caucasians

As is only natural, the deeper we delve into the history of the marriage and family *adats* the more obscure the history becomes.

First of all there are the so-called mother-right vestiges which we must consider. It is interesting to note that the intensity of these vestiges among the three different groups of Caucasians (Northwestern, Northeastern, and Southern)

[*] W. Koppers, *op. cit.*, pp. 12 f., 18—22. See also W. Koppers, "Pferdeopfer und Pferdekult der Indogermanen," *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, IV (1936), pp. 280—411.

[**] "Rosswelhe und Pferderennen im Totenkult der kaukasischen Völker," *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, IV (1936), pp. 412—493.

Northwesterners" and "North Caucasians." In our present study we have considered the use of such terms quite permissible, for we have spoken of periods of total history during which the laws were more or less uniform. But were the marriage and family customary laws so uniform *before* the pastoral nomadic influences set in? What were these laws like? That is the problem of the future. It is a problem which cannot be solved by one man alone, nor can it be solved by one branch of Caucasology alone. It is a problem all branches and all students of Caucasian culture must solve together, not today, not tomorrow, but perhaps only after many decades of intense work.[70]

[7] [8] [70] In solving this problem the Caucasologist may not overlook the results of D. J. Wölfel's many years of research regarding the culture of peoples possessing similar economic forms of life as we find in the Caucasus today.

Prof. Wölfel has traced two extensive Neolithic pastoral-agrarian cultures from Ireland, down to Southern France, Spain, Switzerland, Tyrol, the Carpathian Mountains, the Balkans, the Mediterranean region, especially what he terms "White" Africa, Caucasus, the Near East up to the Himalayas. In Europe the cultures are certainly pre-Indo-European, while in Africa they are pre-Hamitic. In the Caucasus, Africa, and Near East they must have preceded the flourishing cultures of Egypt, Assyria, etc., in other words, certainly before the fifth millenium B. C.

There are two cultures in question: the "Zichbauerkultur" and the "Gebirgsbauerkultur." Both economies are known to the Caucasians!

The "Zichbauer" are semi-nomadic peoples with summer-pastures in the mountains and winter pastures in the lowlands, sometimes several hundred miles apart. They have permanent houses in villages situated on the side of a mountain, where they live whenever not actually with their herds. Originally only sheep and goats were raised, and today usually only sheep and goats are taken from their summer to their winter pastures. These semi-nomads have special customary laws regarding the pastures as well as the strip of land used by the flocks when passing from one pasture to another. These pastoral peoples are at the same time agrarians: their fields are located near their villages, and sometimes they even plough-up a patch near the winter-pasture. This particular economy is spread over "White" Africa, the mountain countries of the Mediterranean, in Spain especially in the Pyrenees, in France, the Balkans, among the Slavs, in Greece, Iran, and the Caucasus.

The "Gebirgsbauerkultur" differs from the former culture in as much as large cattle and not sheep or goats are the main domestic animals. The second difference lies in the fact that these pastoral-agrarians have only summer-pastures (in the highlands), the stall and fodder replacing the winter-pastures. This culture possesses peculiar wooden containers, and distinctive forms of cheese and butter. The typical house is a rectangular building, sunk partly into the side of the mountain; the walls of the groundfloor are of stone while the upper story has wooden walls. The beams between the two stories project in front forming a balcony. The towers, which are so commonly seen in Caucasian villages, are also found in other parts of the world where this particular form of economy is met with. The towers are not only used for defense among these warlike peoples but also as store-rooms. The culture is spread over "White" Africa, among the Basques, in the Alps, Scandanavia, British Isles, the Carpathian Mountains, the Balkans, the Caucasus and in the mountains of Central Asia. (Cf. D. J. Wölfel, "Die Hauptprobleme Weissafrikas," *Archiv für Anthropologie*, XXVII (1942), No. 4.)

According to Prof. Wölfel the *mohaceitic*, fosterage, and not a few of the elements we have established as coming into the Caucasus from Inner Asia are social phenomena peculiar to these Neolithic cultures.

We wish now to enumerate a number of marriage and family customs which seem to hint at some sort of actual relationship with the "Zich-" or "Gebirgsbauer."

Prof. Wölfel, for example, has called my attention to a parallel of the Cherkess and Ossetine corset-ceremony (*supra*, p. 113) found in Tyrol. E. Westermarck (Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco. London, 1914, p. 232) mentions a custom according to which the groom is obliged to [illegible] before the consummation of marriage.

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4. Retrospect

(1) *The marriage and family customary laws of all North Caucasian tribes are astoundingly similar.*

(2) *Their marriage and family adats agree essentially with those of their Caucasian and non-Caucasian (Turco-Mongolian and Indo-European) neighbours.*

(3) *This similarity must be attributed especially*[78] *to common unifying principles.*

(4) *In historical times the unifying principles in question were: Russian (Soviet and pre-Soviet) influences, Islam, Christianity, Roman-Byzantine law, Avesta.*

(5) *The great similarity in marriage and family adats of the North Caucasians must be attributed especially to pastoral nomadic influences originating in Inner Asia.*

Other parallels which I have found in Westermarck's work and which will serve to prove that the oldest cultures of Caucasia cannot be studied without keeping Prof. Wölfel's theory in mind are the following: (1) the frequent use of honey in connection with marriage (*op. cit.*, p. 29); (2) the custom of placing a raw egg in bowl of grain (*op. cit.*, p. 96) and scattering the grains. In this case, however, the sister of the bride does the scattering. (3) The placing of swords to protect the bride from evil spirits (*op. cit.*, pp. 99, 108, 123, 152, 162) is also found in the Caucasus (*supra*, p. 122f.); however, this custom may have come by way of Islamism. (4) The bride and groom eat sheep's liver to insure concord and love (*op. cit.*, p. 101; *supra*, p. 117). In the Caucasus sheep's heart is eaten instead. (5) Stones are thrown at a shrine by the participants of the wedding procession. Westermarck interprets this custom as a means of driving away and killing the Yäbïs; among the Ossetes the shrine is pelted as a fertility rite. (6) In the Caucasus flour is poured on the bride (*supra*, p. 118); in Morocco flour is smeared on the groom (*op. cit.*, p. 147) and milk is poured on the bride. In these ceremonies in both countries it is the whiteness of milk and flour that is stressed, white representing nuptial joy. (7) In the Caucasus a little boy is placed in the lap of the bride so that she may soon become the mother of a boy; in Morocco a boy is placed immediately behind the bride as she rides in the procession from her home to that of her groom. (8) Then there are such customs as giving the bride a stroke as a sign of her husband's authority over her. (*Supra*, p. 119), *op. cit.*, pp. 158 f.) In Palestine this blow is given with a stick as soon as the bride crosses the threshold. (9) Or again, there is the custom of throwing stones at the bride when the procession begins to leave her father's home (*op. cit.*, pp. 176 f); in the Caucasus, among the Andi, we find the custom of throwing filth ar her (*supra*, p. 119). (10) After the virginity test has taken place—just as is the case in the Caucasus—the hymenal blood on the garment is exhibited or a gun is fired announcing her virginity (*op. cit.*, pp. 256 f., 242, 254); but this custom may easily be of Semitic or Hamitic origin. (11) As soon as the bride arrives, her mother-in-law offers her some milk (*op. cit.*, pp. 194, 210); in the Caucasus she smears honey on the bride's lips (*supra*, p. 124).

There are of course other similarities that might be mentioned, but these are probably of Islamic, Arabic, or Hamitic origin. Some of the Hamitic practices (and therefore pastoral nomadic?) are: (1) on the wedding day or shortly before fetching the bride, the cloak of the groom is pulled over his face, just as among the Abkhaz (*op. cit.*, pp. 102, 105 f, 112; *supra*, p. 123); (2) on arriving at her new home, the bride must immediately hide behind a curtain, attended to only by a few female friends (*op. cit.*, p. 105; *supra*, p. 124). (3) A. Hanoteau and A. Letourneux, *La Kabylie et les coutume kabyles*, 1893, mention a number of other pastoral nomadic elements. (See especially volume II, pp. 149, 154, 177, 187, 188, 191, 219.)